

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 057970

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 R

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 057970

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS

SUBJECT: NIEHOUS KIDNAPPING

REF: (A) STATE 51948; (B) ASECIO-SONANDRES TELCON,
MARCH 4; (C) CARACAS 2685

1. DEPT COMMENDS EMBASSY'S HANDLING OF NIEHOUS KIDNAPPING
CASE, PARTICULARLY ITS CARE TO REMAIN FIRMLY IN THE BACK-
GROUND AS GOV AND OWENS-ILLINOIS COMPANY ATTEMPT TO SECURE
NIEHOUS'SAFE RETURN.

2. WE ARE RELUCTANT TO PROVIDE BACK-UP INSTRUCTIONS
REQUESTED PARA 3 REF (C) IN VIEW OF OUR INABILITY TO FORE-
SEE EXACT CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH AN OWENS-ILLINOIS REQUEST
FOR USG INTERCESSION WITH GOV TO PERMIT PUBLICATION OF
ABDUCTORS' COMMUNIQUE MAY ARISE. EMBASSY SHOULD CONTINUE
TO REPORT DEVELOPMENTS AS THEY OCCUR WITH ITS RECOMMENDA-
TIONS. WE EXPECT TO BE ABLE TO RESPOND PROMPTLY TO REQUESTS
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PAGE 02 STATE 057970

FOR GUIDANCE.

3. FOR EMBASSY'S CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION, WE DO NOT AT THIS TIME SEE HOW USG COULD, CONSISTENT WITH ITS TERRORISM POLICIES, INTERCEDE WITH GOV IN EFFORT TO PERSUADE IT TO WITHDRAW OBJECTIONS IT MAY RAISE TO COMPANY'S PURCHASING

MEDIA SPACE OR TIME FOR PUBLICATION OF ENTIRE COMMUNIQUE. OWENS-CORNING WILL OF COURSE BE FREE TO PRESS THE GOV TO WITHDRAW ITS POSSIBLE OPPOSITION, EMPLOYING WHATEVER ARGUMENTATION AND PERSUASIVE FORCE THE COMPANY MAY DECIDE. THIS MAY INCLUDE ARGUMENT THAT ALL OWENS-ILLINOIS IS REQUESTING IS FOR GOV TO STAND ASIDE FROM AN ARRANGEMENT BETWEEN PRIVATE PARTIES FOR PUBLICATION OF COMMUNIQUE AT COMPANY'S EXPENSE IN A FREE PRESS. BUT FOR USG OFFICIALLY TO INTERCEDE WITH GOV TO ALLOW PUBLICATION OF A COMMUNIQUE BITTERLY ATTACKING IT AND ITS POLICIES WOULD CUT DIRECTLY ACROSS OUR FUNDAMENTAL POLICY NOT TO YIELD TO TERRORIST BLACKMAIL DEMANDS, TO URGE THE MERITS OF THIS POLICY ON OTHERS, AND TO REFRAIN FROM COUNSELING A HOST GOVERNMENT ON HOW IT SHOULD RESPOND TO DEMANDS FROM ABDUCTORS OF AMERICAN CITIZENS.

4. AT SAME TIME, WE DO NOT AT THIS POINT WISH TO EXCLUDE ANY FUTURE POSSIBILITY OF USG INVOLVEMENT WITH GOV UNDER ANY AND ALL CIRCUMSTANCES. IT IS EXTREMELY UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT WE WILL BE PREPARED TO COMPROMISE THE POSITION OUTLINED IN PARA 3.

5. ABOVE IS FOR EMBASSY INFORMATION ONLY. WE REITERATE THAT USG GUIDANCE IN THE VARIETY OF CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH MAY ARISE IN THIS CASE MUST AWAIT EMBASSY'S PRESENTATION OF AN ACTUAL SITUATION WITH ITS RECOMMENDATIONS. KISSINGER

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